

thought about them strategically. They're not happening because we've identified wasteful spending. They're not happening because we've discovered some new technology that makes it cheaper to keep our Nation safe. They're only happening because they are, as he put it, "the collateral damage of political gridlock."

We've already seen the effects of these looming cuts in Washington State. The Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, the largest employer in my district, had to postpone its career fair because of all of this budget uncertainty. This is a no brainer—we have the work and we have the workers, but they can't hire because Congress hasn't done its job. Puget Sound Naval Shipyard needs to be able to actively recruit and hire workers. Our local economy needs it, and our national security depends on it. And yet, here we are.

Later today, we will be focusing on legislation that doesn't solve this problem, isn't going to pass the Senate, and isn't going to become law. And after we finish legislative business tomorrow, we're all being sent home for a week. This leaves us with just 4 legislative days for us to act before these across-the-board cuts go into effect.

We were elected to this body to help people. Stopping these damaging, non-strategic, across-the-board cuts to avoid undermining our economy should be our top priority. We should be working day and night until we have a solution. By doing nothing, we risk putting our fragile economy back into a recession. By doing nothing, we refuse the commitments we've made. We're cutting education, kicking kids off Head Start, hurting small businesses, and gutting research and innovation—the foundations of our long-term economic growth.

By doing nothing, we hurt the men and women who spend their days protecting our Nation and providing essential services to the American people. And by doing nothing, Congress is spending the wrong message to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, we need to get America back to work. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to get Congress working again, too. Doing nothing is not an option. Let's put an end to these gimmicks, and let's stop kicking the can down the road. Let's stop these series of self-imposed crises that fissure the trust and predictability that the private sector needs.

Let's work together to reach a balanced compromise to replace the across-the-board cuts with a smart, balanced approach to addressing our fiscal challenges and getting our economy growing again. Let's maintain our commitment to our Nation's most vulnerable and preserve retirement security for our seniors. And let's get America back to work.

## PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this month the Supreme Court will hear arguments in *Shelby v. Holder*, a case that challenges the constitutionality of section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. It is imperative that the Voting Rights Act be upheld in its entirety, for without it, a fundamental piece of our democracy will be out of reach for millions in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here after two decades, and I'm supposed to be standing here representing a district that has been altered twice. But, Mr. Speaker, I stand here representing a district that has been altered three times—that many times—in this last two decades. As we saw in the recent election, discrimination on the basis of race is a persistent reality throughout many localities in States protected by section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Without these protections, voters are at risk of losing their fundamental right to vote and to have that vote counted.

The Voting Rights Act provides a remedy to protect voters, either by addressing actual instances of discrimination or by preventing discrimination from happening in the first place.

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Section 5 provides localities the opportunity to prove that they are fully committed to ensuring everyone has the right to vote, and sets out clear criteria for doing so. In this way, section 5 of the Voting Rights Act encourages localities to establish fair voting practices, but demands real proof of the progress.

I cannot tell you how many cases that come to the attention of the Justice Department, almost on a monthly basis, of discrimination in this area. The Constitution is unequivocally clear that the Congress has the authority to protect voters. That is why Congress spent so much time in 2006 reviewing all the data and hearing from all sides.

The 2006 reauthorization was recognition that discrimination still exists but that Congress has a responsibility to ensure that every voter must continue to exercise their right.

If every State would prove to the voters that they are willing not to discriminate, there would not be the need; but that has not happened. Even States not covered have had difficulty of allowing minorities to express themselves.

Now, I have been a victim of discrimination through redistricting and cracking and packing and every other technique that can happen in redistricting. Mr. Speaker, until we, in this country, can guarantee that voters will be handled fairly, there is no way that we should be talking about doing away

with section 5 of the Voting Rights Act.

## CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. HUELSKAMP) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUELSKAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the first land-grant college in America. Founded on February 16, 1863, Kansas State University has faithfully served the people of Kansas and this great Nation for 150 years.

K-State was one of the first schools to offer a degree in home economics. K-State has helped feed a hungry world through innovative wheat, beef, and sorghum research; and Kansas State University is preparing for the next generation of animal research with the construction of the National Bio and Agri-Defense Facility Research Laboratory.

Let me extend my heartfelt congratulations to Kansas State University for the last 150 years as we look forward to many more successes in the next 150 years.

## REAUTHORIZATION OF SECTION 5 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I've always had such great respect for this distinguished body, the holder and interpreter of democracy, the institution that proudly protects the Constitution that was written by those who saw in this land this bright and shining sun from sea to shining sea, enormous opportunity for freedom.

So many people came to this Nation, and they came in many different ways. We don't carry the way we came into the future, as much as the fact that we are grateful of the opportunity that this Nation has given us.

The Nation has been able to turn the tide on embracing democracy in its fullest because of the Constitution and the laws, because we adhere to the three branches of government. So although my ancestors came to this Nation in bondage that lasted for hundreds of years, slavery, that has its remnants continuously as we move throughout society, there are now laws that can ensure, no matter how you came to this country, no matter what language you spoke, you are, in fact, deserving of the protection of the Constitution.

And so out of that protection came the 14th and 15th Amendments. Those amendments provided that no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, and not deny any person in the jurisdiction equal protection.